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GOLD PRICE SOARS, SILVER MOVES CLOSER TO ₹1 LAKH / KG MILESTONE

Gold price on Monday surged ₹750 to hit ₹80,650 per 10 grams (99.5% purity), while silver zoomed ₹5,000 to ₹99,500 per kg in the national capital

DIWALI, GEOPOLITICAL FACTORS PUSH DEMAND

Bullion traders attributed the jump in gold prices to pick-up in buying by local jewellers to meet increased demand in the festive and wedding season. According to experts tracking the commodities market, the price escalation is also driven by the rising tensions in West Asia and uncertainties related to the US elections, prompting investors to pool their money into safe-haven assets

PRECIOUS METALS SHINE IN FUTURES TRADE

Further, a positive trend in the overseas markets as well as a fall in equity markets boosted the gold's safe-haven appeal, experts said
In futures trades on the Multi Commodity Exchange, gold contracts for December delivery jumped ₹493 or 0.63% to ₹78,242 per 10 grams
Silver contracts bounced ₹2,822 or 2.96% to hit a high of ₹98,224 per kg

₹1,00,564

PRICE OF 1 KG SILVER ON MCX ON MONDAY FOR MARCH 15, 2025 DELIVERY CONTRACT

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INDIA, CHINA IRON OUT WRINKLES

Both sides arrive at patrolling agreement on the LAC ■ Chances brighten for Modi-Xi talks

YESHI SELI & MAYANK SINGH
@ New Delhi

FOREIGN Secretary Vikram Misri's primary briefing on Monday was about the upcoming 16th BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia, but what was casually mentioned became the story of the day — that India and China have arrived at a patrolling agreement along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh.

The jaw-dropping announcement of the thaw in eastern Ladakh came in response to a question from *TNIE* on the buzz on the possibility of Prime Minister Narendra Modi having a bilateral meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit.

PRODUCT OF PATIENT DIPLOMACY: JAISHANKAR

"There are areas which for various reasons after 2020, they blocked us, we blocked them. We have now reached an understanding which will allow patrolling as we did till 2020... It is a positive development and I would say it is a product of very patient, very persevering diplomacy," Jaishankar said

At a different event later in the day, Foreign Minister S Jaishankar indicated that both sides had effectively gone back to the pre-2020 situation. "With that we can say the disengagement with China has been completed. Details will come out in due course," he said. It was in 2020 that 20 Indian jawans died after a brawl with PLA soldiers in the Galwan valley along the LAC. Bilateral ties became frigid ever since.

"Over the last several weeks, Indian and Chinese diplomatic

and military negotiators have been in close contact with each other in a variety of forums. As a result of these discussions, an agreement has been made for patrolling arrangements along the LAC leading to disengagement and a resolution of the issues that had arisen in these areas in 2020. We will be taking the next steps on this," Misri said.

Sources indicated that there is a strong likelihood of the Modi-Xi bilateral. The prime minister will also have bilateral meetings

with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Iranian President Dr Masoud Pezeshkian.

The announcement came days after the US law enforcement department unsealed the second indictment in the alleged murder-for-hire attempt against Khalistani radical Gurbhag Singh Pannun on American soil, in which a former RAW officer was named and shamed.

The two sticking points on the LAC that had defied resolution for this long are at Depsang and Demchok. Multiple military sources said that things will take time to get clear as "not much has changed on ground". Troops continue to be stationed in the vicinity of the 832 km LAC on Eastern Ladakh.

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RG KAR IMPASSE

Medics call off fast after 2-hr talks with Didi

SULAGNA SENGUPTA @ Kolkata

PROTESTING doctors in West Bengal called off their hunger strike on Monday following a two-hour meeting with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

They also cancelled their proposed strike across hospitals in the state on Tuesday.

The decision was taken after a general body meeting of the doctors in the wake of their meeting with Banerjee in the state secretariat.

The doctors had launched the fast-unto-death protest on October 5 in response to the horrific rape-murder of their colleague at RG Kar Hospital in August. Their demands included safety and security within hospitals, systemic reforms in the health-care sector, and removal of West Bengal's health secretary.

Banerjee assured the doctors of her resolve to address their concerns, but she refused to remove Health Secretary Narayan Nigam without evidence against him.

Dr Debasish Halder, speaking on behalf of the junior doctors, said they were not fully satisfied with the government's assurances, but decided to call off stir out of respect for the RG Kar Hospital, victim's parents, who asked them to end the fast. Six doctors had to be hospitalised due to health complications.

While breaking the fast, Dr Rumelika Kumar said, "We are solely lifting the fast on request of the parents and the civil society. We are not doing it because of the government's requests or we are intimidated by them."



CP Yogeshwara signs his resignation letter in Hubballi on Monday

Suspense continues, he may still join Cong

BJP leader CP Yogeshwara is likely to join the Congress on Wednesday and contest as the party's official candidate in the Channarayana Assembly bypoll. Yogeshwara, who had kept Congress in the loop of which Kumaraswamy too was aware, held several rounds of talks with KPCC chief DK Shivakumar's men who struck the deal, sources said.

YOGESHWARA QUILTS AS BJP MLC, SAYS WILL FIGHT AS INDEPENDENT

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Hubballi

IN A sudden turn of events, BJP leader CP Yogeshwara resigned as MLC on Monday. He met Legislative Council Chairman Basavaraj Horatti at the latter's residence here and submitted his resignation letter. After the meeting, Horatti forwarded the resignation letter to the Council Secretariat for further action. Yogeshwara, however, has not quit BJP.

Horatti later told reporters that he had accepted Yogeshwara's letter as he resigned voluntarily. Yogeshwara said, "To contest as an independent candidate in the byelec-

tion to the Legislative Assembly from Channarayana constituency, I have resigned as MLC. Being a member of the Upper House, I cannot contest as an independent candidate. Hence, I decided to resign as the deadline to file nomination papers is fast approaching."

He, however, still has hopes of being a candidate of BJP-JDS alliance. Because of this, he has not quit the saffron party. "I have not quit BJP. Once again I will appeal to the party's central leadership and also to Union Minister and JDS leader HD Kumaraswamy to consider my candidature," he said, and claimed that state BJP leaders are in favour of

fielding him from Channarayana.

Asked if he would join Congress, he said, "As of now, I have resigned as MLC to contest as an independent candidate. But who knows what happens tomorrow? In the past too, I contested as an independent candidate and also from various parties. Soon, I will hold a meeting with my supporters and well-wishers and take a decision in this regard."

Dismissing the possibility of contesting as a JDS candidate, he said that his supporters are against it. Even JDS workers are against it. He could only fight as a BJP candidate and it will help strengthen the saffron party's base in the Old Mysore region, he added.

Hoax callers to be put on no-fly list: Aviation minister

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

TO deal with the menace of hoax bomb threats to airlines, the Centre plans to amend rules to place the culprits in the no-fly list and initiate criminal charges against them, Civil Aviation Minister K Ram Mohan Naidu said on Monday. He said such threats will be made a cognisable offence, which will attract punishment and fines.

Naidu said the government is considering amendments to the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against Safety of Civil Aviation Act, 1982, to strengthen measures. "Even though most of them are hoax threats, we cannot take them lightly. The lives of passengers are important, the security situation is impor-

tant, and protocol is important," he added.

These hoax bomb calls also caused financial loss to airlines that had to divert flights for safety reasons. An airline official said the financial loss due to frequent diversions ranges from a few lakh rupees to a couple of crores per flight, depending on the size of the plane.

The minister also announced the extension of the affordable regional air connectivity scheme, UDAN, for 10 more years. Around 1.5 crore passengers have benefited so far.

Meanwhile, CISF and BCAS brass met Home Secretary Govind Mohan on Monday. Sources said the threats originated overseas, but their exact location could not be traced yet.



HAVING A FIELD DAY

Children make the most of the holiday declared for schools following heavy rain across the city on Monday. The city received a whopping 61.9 mm rain from Sunday evening to early Monday morning, triggering water logging and tree fall in several areas. Meanwhile, an orange alert (moderate to heavy rainfall) has been issued for the city | SHASHIDHAR BHARPPA | P2

SC: Secularism part of statute's basic structure

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY @ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday said secularism had always been held to be part and parcel of the basic structure of the Constitution. A two-judge bench of the court comprising Justices Sanjay Khanna and Sanjay Kumar made the observation while hearing a batch of petitions filed by former Rajya Sabha MP Subramanian Swamy, advocate Vishnu Shankar Jain and others, challenging the insertion of the words "socialist" and "secular" in the Preamble of the Constitution. The addition came through the 42nd constitutional amendment moved by the then Indira Gandhi government in 1978.

"This court has in a number of judgments held that secularism was always part of the basic structure of the Constitution. If one looks at the right to equality and the word 'fraternity' used in the Constitution, there is a clear indication that secularism has been held as the core feature of the Constitution," the bench said.

"When secularism was debated, there was only the French model. The Supreme Court has struck down statutes that go against secularism. You may look at Article 25. For socialism, we have not followed the Western concept and we are happy about it," Justice Khanna told the petitioners.

He said there were different meanings of socialism and one "should not take the meaning adopted in Western countries". "Socialism can also mean there has to be a fair opportunity for all — the concept of equality. Let us not take it as a Western concept. It can have some different meanings as well. Same goes with the word secularism," he said.

Swamy submitted that the Preamble was a declaration made on November 26, 1949, and therefore, adding further words to it through a subsequent amendment was arbitrary. He said it was wrong to say that according to the present Preamble, the Indian people agreed on November 26, 1949, to make the country a socialist and secular republic. The Preamble cannot be altered, varied or repealed, he argued. The bench said it would examine the matter and posted it for further hearing on November 18.



IN THE SC

Retrospective effect challenge
Advocate Ashwini Upadhyay said he was not against the words "socialist", "secular" or "integrity" but was against their insertion into the Preamble in 1976 with retrospective effect from Nov 26, 1949

A school of farmers, by farmers, for farmers

K SHIVA KUMAR @ Mandya

A group of teachers has come forward to open a first-of-its-kind 'Farmers' School', which is 'of the farmers and for the farmers', at Alakere village in Mandya taluk.

The idea is to empower those engaged in agriculture and also those keen on taking it up as a profession or hobby.

Led by Sathyamurthy, a lecturer from Mandya, the seven-member group, all teachers from families of farmers, decided to open the school after seeing the plight of farmers during last year's drought and

Covid-19 pandemic, and also considering various problems, including the increasing number of suicides by farmers.

The aim of the group is to make agriculture lucrative and farmers self-reliant in all aspects. This will help prevent migration of youngsters from villages to cities in search of jobs and also farmers from selling their land.

The group has visited more than 200 villages to understand the problems of farmers. To encourage them, it has roped in experts in agriculture and progressive farmers.



The Farmer School (Rajitha Shaale) at Alakere village in Mandya district | UDAYASHANKAR S

Apart from educating farmers, the group is keen on holding training camps, field visits and sessions by experts at the 'Farmers' School'.

After forming 'Kempagowda Vokkaligara Welfare Group', the teachers laid the foundation stone for the school recently.

The school will showcase success stories of farmers from various countries, including Israel. A seminar hall and a few classrooms will be ready in two months at Alakere. The group has plans to open many such schools across the state.

Sathyamurthy said farmers are free to walk into the school for guidance on farming. "We will also guide youngsters, including techies, keen on farming," he added.

Shortage of translators cripples K'taka's DoT

BOSKY KHANNA @ Bengaluru

THE Directorate of Translations (DoT) is facing a severe shortage of translators, especially English to Kannada, and vice versa. The post of Hindi translator has been vacant for the past 15 years.

According to officials, the directorate has only 19 of the 40 sanctioned staff strength. The state government has promised to recruit nine translators through the KPSC. But they are not sure when the recruitment will happen, they said.

Because of the shortage of translators, regular govern-

ment work has been affected, especially communication between the Union and state governments, and also between the state government and courts. "There is a need for English and Hindi translators. But we do not have one. We are outsourcing the translation work and there are chances of errors or leak of information," said a senior DoT official.

"These are all government jobs. We have made many requests. But the government is yet to appoint translators. We need experts," M Venkatesh, DoT Director, told *The New Indian Express*.

EXPRESS READ

SIT seeks cancellation of bail to HDK in mining case

Bengaluru: Karnataka Lokayukta's Special Investigation Team probing the illegal mining cases, has moved the Special Court requesting cancellation of bail granted to Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy in the case related to Sri Sai Venkateshwara Minerals | P3

SC stops K'taka from declaring board results

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday pulled up the Karnataka government for conducting board examinations for different classes, and restrained it from declaring the results of board exams for Classes 8, 9 and 10, till further orders | P7